Government of India

(i) Continuation of existing VRS grants upto 31st March, 2004 which has been agreed to by Government of India.

(ii) Streamlining the procedure for the sanction of coal projects.

The total financial involvement of relief and concessions on various heads such as waiver of electricity duty for 5 years, waiver of interest on unsecured loans, waiver of service charges, waiver of unsecured loan etc. from State Government, Central Government and Coal India Ltd. is to the extent of Rs. 5348.93 crores.

Initiatives taken to increase investment in coal-mines sector

701. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some fresh initiatives, like the single window project-clearance mechanism etc., have been taken to increase investment in the coal-mines sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and their present status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Initiatives have been taken to eliminate unnecessary layers in decision making in sanctioning of coal projects and in streamlining the procedure for environment and forestry clearances.

Private participation in coal sector

702. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have prepared draft Coal Mines Nationalisation (Amendment) Bill to facilitate the private participation in the coal sector to enable the Government to give coal blocks to private companies for captive mining;

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed amendment;

(c) whether any consultations have been made with the representatives in this regard; and